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AN

INAUGURAL LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE CLARENDON,

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AND

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INAUGURAL LECTURE.

Mr. Vice Chancellor,

I trust, I am not so presumptuous as to be capable of entering on the duties recently entrusted to me, without great and unaffected anxiety. No man can contemplate the position, which this University holds, and ought to hold in the country, without feeling that any office connected with its public character is attended with a grave responsibility. And in proportion to the value attached to one particular branch of academical study, is the responsibility increased of those, to whom its principal direction is committed. It has been the great wisdom of this University for many years to make the science of morals a main feature in our system of education. And to this we undoubtedly owe much of that soundness and moderation, which characterize both our institutions themselves, and the general temper of mind which is formed under their influence.

Whatever advantages are possessed by physical

and mathematical sciences, in the brilliancy of their inventions, and in their contributions to the luxury of society, they cannot be compared with the philosophy of the human mind either as fields for the exercise of our moral and intellectual faculties, or in the real dignity of their subjects, or in their influence on the general improvement of human nature.

Our daily life is cast in a world of contingencies and probabilities. When we reason, we can scarcely reach beyond conjecture. And when we reason not, our conduct is guided by a sort of moral faith in the unseen results of principles. It is therefore much safer to prepare the mind for acting in the midst of complicated conditions and casualties, by habituating us to moral reasonings on moral subjects, and with an insight into the mind itself from whose movements all uncertainty proceeds, than by fixing the faculty of attention—and of attention only—on abstract relations, and general laws, which neither admit of doubt, nor call into play any internal activity, not at last reducible into mechanical operations. It is much wiser to discipline man in a real world of thought and action, than to amuse him with theories however beautiful, of which the basis must be mainly hypothesis. And we shall be much more likely to generate high powers of thought, and at the same time to save those powers from wasting themselves in empty speculation,

if we turn the eye of the mind in upon itself, and lay its own mechanism before it, than by engrossing it with external objects which require less intense contemplation, and scarcely suggest a duty.

But the philosophy of mind is in many other respects a far nobler instrument, and field of education than mere abstract demonstrative sciences.

It brings us into contact with spirit instead of matter—with human beings, and more than human beings, instead of ideal quantities and mechanical laws. It places us under the instruction of books and men, where a moral influence is exerted by the exhibition of personal character, and thus accustoms us to look for guidance in the formation of our judgment to other elements, than logical precision of reasoning. It raises up the veil of antiquity, and transports us into associations with its greatest minds, that we may behold in the past not a mere magazine of lifeless truths, but moral beings like ourselves for our veneration and affection. It accustoms us to view the world neither as a mass of materials to be put together by art for the purposes of selfish indulgence, nor as a plaything for abstract speculation, but as a scene of moral relations, discipline and duties, into which we are born as infants, and from which we may issue as angels. It reveals to us a vast invisible uni-

verse of spiritual beings, instead of absorbing us wholly in that low materialism, into which this present age under the exaggerated influence of the Baconian philosophy is rapidly degenerating.

In the grandeur of its range it surpasses and includes the provinces of nearly every other science and art. For it explores that ultimate power which perceives, and judges, and feels, and shapes, and examines the subjects and objects of them all. Not only our sentiments on moral right and wrong, but theories of taste, the laws of reasoning, the principles of social union, the elementary conditions of language, even our primary conceptions of the material world, fall under the view of the same philosophy, as being all ultimately founded on the constitution of the human mind. And hence the vast influence exerted by this science secretly or openly on the course of human affairs[a]. What

[a] "Tis evident that all the sciences have a relation greater or less to human nature, and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of man, since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties.....If therefore the sciences of mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion have such a dependence on the knowledge of man, what may be expected in the other sciences, whose connection with human nature is more close and intimate? The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas. Morals and criticism regard our tastes and sentiments; and politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. Here then is the only expedient

Cicero said of the highest philosophy of all may be applied to this. "Ac mihi quidem veteres illi majus quiddam animo complexi plus multo etiam vidisse videntur, quam quantum nostrorum ingeniorum acies intueri potest; qui omnia hæc, quæ supra et subter, unum esse et unâ vi, atque unâ consensione naturæ constricta esse dixerunt. Nullum est enim genus rerum, quod aut avulsum a cæteris per seipsum constare, aut quo cætera si careant, vim suam atque æternitatem conservare possent. Sed si hæc major esse ratio videtur, quam ut hominum possit sensu aut cogitatione comprehendi, est etiam illa Platonis vera, et tibi, Catule, certè non inaudita vox, Omnem doctrinam harum ingenuarum et humanarum artium uno quodam societatis vinculo contineri. Ubi enim perspecta vis est rationis ejus, quâ causæ rerum atque exitus cognos-

from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious lingering method which we have hitherto followed, and instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or centre of these sciences, to human nature itself; which being once masters of, we may everywhere else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure, to discover more fully those which are the objects of pure curiosity. There is no question of importance, whose decision is not comprised in the science of man, and there is none which can be decided with any certainty before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security." Hume's Treatise of Human Nature.

cuntur, mirus quidam omnium quasi consensus doctrinarum concentusque reperitur." Cicero de Oratore.

Moreover men can afford to be ignorant of the relations of abstract magnitudes, of the composition of gases, of mechanical forces. And all which is lost by such ignorance from the gratification of our curiosity, or the pampering of our indolence and luxury, may be supplied to our infinite good by moral energy, or even moral endurance. But we cannot afford, least of all in our youth, when the most appalling perplexities of our human condition force themselves most palpably on our consciousness—to part with any light which can be thrown on the history of our minds. We cannot even herd together as social beings, much less fulfil the grander aspirations and destinies of our nature, without aid from that philosophy which limits our wants, describes our duties, controls our passions, animates our energies—reveals our end.

Every man possesses within himself, though he may not be able to state it in words, some theory of his moral nature. He cannot act or live without it. God indeed does permit many to pass through the material world, without a thought even of wonder on the mechanism of its laws. But he does not permit even the child to become conscious of its own existence, without forcing it into some reflection, suggesting some

principle or fancy, on which to shape its conduct, as a thinking responsible being, placed here to live for the future by the memory of the past. Hence it is that the diffusion of a sound moral philosophy is a matter of incalculable importance to a nation and an age. Not that mere theories without practice can benefit the thinker, or that abstract speculation can act immediately on the mass of the people. But there is a popular language of actions into which all men translate and transfuse their most abstruse theories of morals, and may thus fix them as the creed of a whole nation. And as at times the corruptions of society have generated a pestilential scheme of metaphysics, by which fresh corruptions have been propagated—generated it at first within the walls of a school, and thence over a whole country—so at other times the torrent of evil has been stemmed by some grand truth reared up perhaps within some sanctuary of philosophy in a cold and mysterious abstraction, but rendered visible and intelligible and influential to common minds through the medium of example and practice in human agents.

In one word, because every man must possess some theory of morals however false and imperfect, and this theory must flow out into his practice, and this practice must transmit it to others, it is scarcely possible to calculate the

extent to which a system of moral philosophy may act upon the interests of mankind.

These are a few of the reasons which render this science an element so important in any sound system of education. I do not however propose at present to dwell on this view of its tendencies.

There is an opposite consideration pressing more forcibly upon my own mind at this moment, and perhaps more requiring attention; I mean the dangers connected with this study, and the principles by which they may be averted, averted without imposing any servile restriction on a necessary freedom of enquiry. And on these two points I will venture to make a few observations; and to fix, at least for my own satisfaction, some fundamental laws, under which, by the blessing of God, I may hope to discharge the duties of this chair, neither timidly as fearing to follow any one into the very depths and darknesses of moral investigation, nor rashly, as if it were a pride needlessly to quit the firm solid ground of duties which we feel as men, and the glorious light of heaven in which we are walking as Christians, and go down to bury ourselves alive in the catacombs of metaphysics, except it be to rescue others now perishing in their labyrinths, or to rear up some guide-stones for those who may wander there hereafter.

One evil then of moral science, which it shares with all other science, is a tendency to absorb us in speculation. The expression is open to mistake, and has often excited cavils; and it requires some restriction. If speculation then means the search into truth, the struggle to examine and prove received systems, the exercise of our intellect to the very highest degree of activity compatible with known duties, to proscribe speculation is to proscribe reason, and to proscribe reason is to condemn our God who gave it to us. But speculation bears another sense in which it is full of evil. I mean by it, the placing ourselves to the universe at large, or to the subjects of demonstrative sciences, or to our fellow men and the laws of our own nature as mere spectators—as if knowledge were an end, and the search for it an ultimate virtue. It has been in this sense the bane of almost every system of philosophy which has had its rising and setting in the world. And it is the predominating sin of the present generation.

God has placed us here—it is a common metaphor—as on the stage of a theatre to act—it should rather be, to practice and perfect ourselves in a part. And whenever we quit the stage, and go and seat ourselves among the audience to examine the building, or to criticize the performance of others, if our object be the indulgence of indolence, or pride, or mere curio-

sity—if it be any thing but the better discharge of our own office, after temporary repose or with increased knowledge, we are forsaking our post, we neglect our duty.

There is in fact one great truth which is the key to many mysteries of the external universe, and the guide to all first principles of our internal education. It is, that power, mental power, command over others and ourselves, is the great end of our creation. We are not born with it, but we may die with it in our possession, and carry it with us into another world. Not only the positive injunctions of Christianity, which are our first law, but the whole system of its facts is full of this truth. And it is recognised equally as the primary condition of mental perfection by every scheme of philosophy and by the common instincts of the world. The mystical spirituality of oriental theories—the practical maxims of the early Grecian schools—the mental energy of Aristotle—the assimilation to the Deity of Plato—the ἀπέχου καὶ ἀνέχου of the Stoic, and even the indolence of Epicurus—much more the return of the soul into the bosom of the Deity, held forth by the Alexandrian philosophy—and the imperative demand for human freedom which has been made by the profoundest speculations of modern days, all imply alike, that mind without power is scarcely mind. And they have only stated abstractedly what is evi-

dent in every act of society; in the feelings which regulate all social subordination, in the tendencies of our individual ambition, and in the highest creations of the human fancy—that as machines we are not moral beings, that without internal self-acting power we are machines; and that this power can only be acquired by continued and progressive exertions of it. Let us add that Christianity itself equally makes the same demand—demands of us the exertion of a power which it declares that as men we do not possess, and cannot generate of ourselves by any force or any philosophy—demands it as essential to our spiritual life, and the first condition of our goodness. But it does what no other system could do. It supplies what it demands—gives us a new power, and exhibits it around us in actions, which to the eye of a thinking man are daily miracles. And yet this power it infuses into our hearts so secretly, mixes it up so deeply with our own human nature, that still we may call it a part of ourselves, and use to the Christian as to the Heathen the same exhortations to self-control and independent action, though to the Heathen they serve only as tests of his own weakness, and to the Christian, are in theory though not in practice contradicted by every confession of his heart, and the very first truths of the Bible.

Now it is because a habit of speculation is destructive of this power that speculation is so dangerous. Such indeed is not the common opinion. Men think because the effects and productions of reason are gigantic in their magnitude, and extraordinary in their nature, that they are therefore indications of extraordinary energy of mind; just as if a vast accumulation of power in a steam engine could raise it into the character of a self-acting principle, or could be assumed as a proof that it made and regulates itself. But the real power of the engine is external to it. It can only distribute the amount supplied, and distribute it unthinkingly and unresistingly. And so far as the act of reasoning is not carried on under the pressure of a moral principle, as the discharge of duty, in a government of the thoughts, in patience, in honesty, in self-command, so far it is as wholly mechanical, as the movements of iron wheels and the violence of exploding steam.

In fact no power exists internally in mind, except a moral power. All its intellectual operations are carried on by general laws, by trains of associations, by accidental coincidences of thought, or by technical habits of enquiry, into which we may be led as passively and as blindly as into the routine of bodily labour.

But moral power is only to be formed and

accumulated by exercise on a particular class of objects in a particular direction—a direction to which the habit of speculation is essentially opposed.

It is a general law, (which it would be well to bring clearly into light; for its neglect would seem to be the cause of nearly all the mischief now working around us in this age,) that the only objects which can serve as the medium of generating moral power in the human mind are moral beings, and then only when they are contemplated in relation to us, and we to them.

I will endeavour to state the truth more clearly.

Every one will allow that we never exert a real control over ourselves—act from internal principles opposed to passive impressions—rise up to the majesty of beings independent of outward influences—in one word, possess or exercise power, except when we follow a duty against an inclination. There is indeed a time when the struggle often repeated is rendered easier and lighter, and virtue at last becomes almost mechanical. But even then it retains the dignity of moral agency from the power previously exerted. All previous action without a struggle is but submission to impression—a passive movement, lifeless as the floating of a boat down a stream, or the whirling of a leaf in the wind.

But it is also clear that no duty can exist

except towards persons. No object in the world binds us, ties us down by a sense of paramount imperative right to one course of action more than another, except mental beings like ourselves, possessed of that internal self-acting power, that ἀρχη πράξεως, which constitutes personality. God seems to have placed moral beings under a system of mutual gravitation, attraction, and influence, just as he governs the heavenly bodies. Mind acts upon mind, and person impels person. Neither the winds of heaven, nor the earthquake, nor the volcano seem to affect for a moment the rolling on of the earth in its orbit. But let a comet cross its path, or the sun drop from its centre, or even a distant planet suspend its course, and the earth would feel the shock. And so as we advance into a higher and more etherial region of spiritual existence, material objects cease wholly to affect us: and at no time, even when our feelings are most deeply immersed in the body, do they affect us with a sense of duty, so that a stone or a plant, or even an inferior animal should claim over us a single right, or call up an active exertion. All sense of duty of whatever kind is ultimately resolvable into the perception of those relations in which we stand to other beings like ourselves, and into the acknowledgment of certain feelings—and as naturally flowing from such feelings—of certain actions attached to those relations by God

in the primary eternal constitution of our nature.

We learn these relations by degrees, by many efforts, by discovering daily fresh moral beings around us, by placing ourselves in connection with them, and them with us, and accustoming ourselves to regard them in all our actions. Just as if the Almighty, when he threw forth a planet from his hand, instead of binding it by an internal necessity into a fixed course, and unalterable subjection to the influence of the system around it, should launch it into the abyss of space to wander, and to discover by degrees the orbs through which, and with which its movements should run, and to subdue its course by a free act of self-control into harmony with them and with itself. But the habit of speculation is directly opposed to the formation of this knowledge and self-government. It leads us to regard both things and persons, both material fabrics and moral agents in themselves only—as objects to be examined and anatomized, and preserved as phænomena for experiment—instead of placing them at once in their relation to ourselves to wake up our sense of duty, and rouse us to active conduct.

There is a sort of electric influence, which should circulate freely and equably through the whole system of moral beings, to preserve them in health and vigour. But speculation insulates

us from them—and though we indulge our curiosity in witnessing their discharges upon others, they are not suffered to affect ourselves. And such speculation on moral subjects is even more deadening and injurious in its tendency than the enquiries of physical science, because, where the greatest opportunity of good exists, there is the greatest evil, if the opportunity is abused; and a wrong mode of viewing spiritual beings—of viewing them as unconnected with ourselves, and without any stimulus to action—is so much the more dangerous, because our great duty and great interest depends on our viewing them aright. For in the often quoted words of Butler, "Going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible i. e. form an habit of insensibility to all moral considerations." Analogy, B. 1. C. 5.

And it is full of interest and warning to observe the effects of such a practice upon the character of metaphysical enquirers. They exhibit generally great coldness and want of feeling, as being cut off from the only sources of genuine warmth, and sympathy, and emotion—great assumption of power, because they mistakingly measure the amount of their own internal energy,

not by resistance to inclinations, but by the force and novelty and mystery of the truths on which they light—at the same time great feebleness under ordinary pressure, because in reality there has been no practice of endurance or strength —great conceit and contempt of their fellow creatures, because no comparison has been instituted between themselves and others—rash and unauthorized views, such as naturally carry away minds unaccustomed to act amidst the many checks and counteracting influences of numerous moral relations—vain dreams of human perfectibility, uncontrolled by the bitter consciousness of its hopelessness, because this hopelessness has never been evidenced by the failure of their own heart to fulfil its acknowledged duties. With these faults they generally join a morbid querulousness on the defects of social institutions, and fantastical projects of amendment; for they enter into the crowd of life unconscious of the various interests and conflicting duties which complicate its innumerable relations, and therefore unprepared to excuse collision, or to be patient under delay. I will add, a melancholy scepticism—when they discover that God has placed us down to grope our way to the foot of his throne through a fearful darkness, in which sight is of little use and nothing but practical duties can keep us from despair at its depth, or bring us through it; and like the blind man

newly couched, they think their sight will serve them, and do not know that they must even now close their eyes, and feel their way about with their hands and feet.

I would mention also a self-satisfaction and complacency while the attention is occupied with new and amusing investigations, and hopeless disappointment and stagnation when from weariness or illness these can no longer be carried on. Nothing in truth can save our hearts and minds from a miserable vacuity, but the filling them with the presence and affections of moral objects. Without this we may indeed be insensible to our wants and hunger, while the fever of curiosity is on us, but when that is gone, we shall find that we are starving. Lastly, there is in all such characters an ultimate tendency to sensualism and materialism. We are placed indeed as men between the earth and the sky, as body and soul, matter and spirit. And it is a law of our nature that an exclusive contemplation of either extreme, insensibly brings us round to an extreme on the other side. If we bury ourselves wholly in matter we inevitably sink into superstition. If we dwell wholly on a spiritual world we slide insensibly into the dulness and grossness of materialism.

I do not propose here to enter into the explanation of this fact, but it is the most remarkable phænomenon in the history of philosophy,

and requires a long and minute analysis. But a practical search and application of metaphysical truths is here the only safeguard. It is indeed our duty to struggle out of this dungeon of sense, and to live in an etherial atmosphere amidst a world of spirits. But we must live with them as companions, in reciprocal relations, in practical duties, or that region will not offer us a home. It allows no one to pry into its mysteries with impunity, who does not propose to settle there as an active member of its state. All others will find that they can retain no strength, that they cannot even live in that subtle air, but after every effort will fall back to grovel again in the very lowest parts of the earth.

Such are some of the effects of metaphysical speculation in moral subjects—merely as speculation—upon the formation of character. And it must not be forgotten that in moral subjects there are peculiar tendencies to foster the habit of speculation. They require intense reflection, and throw the eyes of the mind in upon itself, till it can scarcely be turned off to perceive its external relations. They afford a perpetual supply of materials for thought, an infinite range of generalization, an exciting array of interesting problems. They are nobler and more elevated in their character than physical facts, and thus delude us into the belief that

we are occupied in an employment worthy of our nature. And they bring before our eyes theories and visions of virtue, the enjoyment of which we mistake for practical goodness, and compound for the neglect of moral energies by indulging in moral sensibilities.

But even on the supposition that moral science does not degenerate into speculation, there are other dangers connected with it, requiring the most serious precautions. And if any one should be startled at this mode of viewing the subject, and think such fears extravagancies, let him look narrowly to the lives of those men who have been most deeply involved in these studies—let him consider the internal state of the Athenian and other people at a time when metaphysical enquiries were flourishing to their highest pitch —let him examine the tone which moral philosophy has uniformly assumed even in the days of Christianity, in neglect of its most sacred influences, or in direct opposition to them, and I think he will at least feel, though he may not be able to explain the fact, that the whole region of this science is beset with a chilling and deadening atmosphere, which the mind can scarcely breathe without losing something of its warmth, and life, and buoyancy.

There was a time, when we were children in our hearts, playing under the shadow of those mighty systems which we are now summoned

to support, and yielding in faith to the instincts which, now they have been turned to reasonings, we distrust or fear. And the time will come—come to us by inspiration from heaven—when we shall be such once more—when reflection shall have done its work, and the struggle of our double nature be past, and with the dignity of reasoning spirits knowing good and evil, we shall be restored to the calm, and simplicity, and trustfulness, and forgetfulness of self, of our happiest childhood. But all the space between is full of dreariness and pain.

All reasoning comes from doubt, and all doubt from ignorance and error. And reasoning upon our duties and ourselves, may be a necessary, but it is not a happy, nor generally a beneficial part of our human virtues. Questionings in casuistry, the analysis of our moral nature, and all those anatomical operations, which lay open the secret fibres of our hearts, as a study for future experimenters, are indications of latent disease, instead of health. And though at times they may assist us in selecting among various means, they too often cause vacillation of purpose, exhibit internal weakness of principle, and substitute the coldness and powerlessness of an artificial scheme for the warmth and energy of nature's unconscious instincts. It is in morals as in taste.

Some souls God seems to have blest with an

intuition of beauty, so delicate and so spontaneous, that the very touch of criticism chills and withers it. All noble works of genius are the natural unconscious overflowings of this exquisite sensibility; and tamer and meaner minds elaborate them into systems of art, but never can imitate. The poetic or creative faculty in the imagination, and the critical judgment, are in themselves wholly distinct powers, and when they co-exist in the same mind, too rigid an application of laws and rules will cramp and deaden all natural energies of taste. And in morals the same. And I know not a spectacle more bitterly humiliating than one of those childlike innocent minds, which God seems to reserve upon earth as his own especial treasure, pouring itself forth in all the simplicity of fervid devotion in sacrifices worthy of a hero, and looking up in wonder and perplexity when asked its motives, or compassionated for its pain. I know nothing more humiliating to a man, who can stand by, and explain every thought, and follow up every vibration of feeling, and extol with scientific precision the grace and dignity of each action—himself incapable either of acting or of feeling. It may be, that by some natural providence which it may not be difficult to trace out, God gives the glow of life, and the instinctive enjoyment of goodness to those who have kept nearest to his side; and dooms to the task of anatomising it

minds ruder and more conversant with sin. But it may be also, that the very business of this moral dissection—this practice of taking the living and breathing forms of holiness and virtue, and stretching them beneath the scalpel of an unsympathizing criticism—is a searing and deadening process.

Assuredly there are many things which can only be done well, when we think nothing of the mode in which we do them. A man cannot walk along a precipice if he thinks of the movement of his feet. A rope-dancer loses his balance when the music ceases to engross his attention. A painter's enthusiasm is chilled when he is compelled to apply measurement to his figures. An actor is stripped of his power, when he remembers that he is on a stage. And love, and pity, and patience, and courage, and all other virtues almost cease to exist, when those who would exert them think of themselves.

Our business is to fill our minds with the moral object before us, that is, with the moral person in relation to whom we are acting. So long as we think wholly of him and forget ourselves, nature will take care of the movements of our hearts, and they will all be right. But let a thought of ourselves intervene—any thing like self-consciousness—and affectation, or vanity, at least perplexity, will destroy the quietness and

simplicity of our actions, and convert them almost into sins.

And thus it is that moral science may be reserved for those who are inferior to others in real moral goodness, and if permitted to engross the mind too much, may clash with and deaden its best movements.

I have now alluded to two classes of dangers connected with the study of moral philosophy, one the result of speculation when separated from practice, the other of the same speculation even when conducted in subserviency to duty, and for a practical end.

I propose now to make a few observations on a third class of dangers, with which the science of morals is beset—a class arising chiefly from errors flowing from the nature of the subject on which the science is employed.

Some investigations of reason may be carried on in safe and healthy exercise, among scenes of purity and tranquillity, and beneath an invigorating atmosphere. There are others, which lead us down into places of darkness and peril, amidst choaking caverns and vapours ready for explosion. And so far from permitting this peril to derogate from the value and dignity of the philosophy of morals, let us rather regard the science with more respect as we approach it with more caution, since here also, as in the other labours of

mankind, the greatest danger is attached to the extraction of our greatest treasures.

The science of mind, like the sciences of matter, consists in the evolution of general laws from masses of heterogeneous combinations. A drug is administered to a sick man and health is restored. Heat is applied to water, and a powerful vapour is generated. The effect is to be traced up into connection with that particular condition, or collection of conditions on which it uniformly follows, and which we denominate its cause, and science has then done its work. And the difficulty of the process lies first in accurately analyzing all the elements and circumstances of the fact, and secondly, in singling out from them all, by the recollection or construction of experiments, the essential condition or cause. It is as if a theft has been committed, and we assemble all the parties who might have been engaged in it, and search each till the property be found.

But in the philosophy of mind both the analysis and the experiment are full of difficulties. If in the imperfection of our bodily senses we find it hard to drag out to view all the secret elements and conflicting relations which enter into a physical phænomenon, it is still harder to take the human mind out as it were of itself—to place it before our eyes—to detach ourselves entirely from connection with it, and from external distractions—to assume wholly the character of an

impartial spectator—and then, by an effort of attention often exquisitely painful, to struggle to grasp and arrest its changeful evanescent image, which seems loath to be evoked from its cell, and at the first relaxation of thought, slips like a shadow from our hands.

For little assistance can be gained at first from observing the minds of others. They are in fact beyond our reach, and we only conjecture their movements by the analogy of our own. We know nothing of them but by outward actions and words; and these, as a series of symbols, we interpret to represent internal operations, according to the laws which have been observed within ourselves. And hence self-reflection, the most difficult of all mental exertions, is the preliminary indispensable condition of moral studies. How few are capable of sustaining it, even in its physical effects, I need not say.

But the elements from which moral laws are to be extracted are also much more numerous and complicated than those of physical phænomena. Let the same logical process be pursued in educing a right theory of gravitation and a right theory of association; and we shall find that the mental fact is mixed up with many more conditions and affected by many more relations than the material fact, as it presents itself at first to our view.

Without entering further at present into the

cause of this, it may be illustrated by the innumerable combinations of casuistical cases—by the various theories on the nature of right and wrong, each of which has seized separately on some one feature of a subject which really combines them all—and by the difficulty of settling principles of taste from the multitude of accounts which may be given of the beauty or deformity of an object.

The impossibility also of constructing experiments is another obstacle to testing the truth of hypotheses in moral questions.

But in addition to these occasions of error, there is another inevitable cause, which deserves a more full illustration; because it lies at the root of nearly all fallacies in metaphysical theories. It is the germ of all false rationalism.

In physical enquiries the faculty which contemplates and the subject contemplated are, first, two wholly distinct things. The nature of the one is no way affected by, or dependent on the condition of the other. Secondly, they are each, in a considerable degree, fixed and immutable. They do not change and waver during the progress of the observation. The movements of the planetary system are the same now as at the beginning of the world. And the reasoning power employed on them is subject to few variations, except those which arise from the influx of fresh facts, or from increased facility

in using them, neither of which affects its internal essential character. But when the eye of the mind is turned in upon itself, the two terms, that is, the beholder and the object beheld, however distinguished in the act of reflection, are in the first place really and truly one and the same. And secondly, the mind itself, unlike the fabrics of the changeless material world, is in a constant state of development or contraction—retrograding or advancing. It is brought into the world almost as nothing, and passes through stage after stage of gradual alteration to its final maturity. Up to the last moment of life it must be imperfect. Truths indeed, and laws and feelings are written indelibly on its nature, and cannot be erased, but they come out slowly and partially under the heat of external impressions, and never are seen in full array, with all their secrets brought to light, until the end of a holy life. Now the danger—nay the certainty—of falling into vital errors in forming theories of the human mind, arises from this fact, that the necessarily imperfect mind of each individual can only judge of human nature by itself, a necessarily imperfect standard. We are in a word in the position of a deformed person who should be excluded from forming any conception of the human frame, except that which he derived from beholding his own image in a glass. The observation perhaps is not so obviously true in the

more abstract logical inquiries, where simple reason is operating upon reason. But in more complicated moral questions, where feelings and passions are interested, it is easy to see what perverted views must follow from a distorting eye, contemplating an equally distorted object through a distorting medium.

But this is not all. In the perpetual fluctuations of our moral constitution, and therefore of our moral judgments, fresh occasions of error arise. These fluctuations should rather be termed vibrations or oscillations—rapid transitions from one extreme to another of those opposite poles between which it is the intention of nature that we should finally settle, though we do not find the centre till after a long experience. Opposite tendencies form the great law of our nature, and till we have acquired an internal power to resist their excess and harmonize their influences—not as men generally suppose by excluding or by modifying either, but by retaining them both unimpaired in their proper subordination to each other—we sway backwards and forwards with every fresh instinct or impression. Hence that remarkable feature in the history of philosophy, the predominance in every system, and almost in every age and individual, of some one idea or feeling, exclusive of others equally inherent in our common nature. We are not capable at any time of viewing objects except in parts and

successions. We are not able, till a very advanced stage of moral wisdom, to prevent one part from swallowing up the whole; and therefore till that stage has been reached, we must be perpetually in error.

And these errors are the more mischievous, because they are accompanied with a reasoning process, and so are mistaken for authorized conclusions. Even blind natural instincts are for the most part safer guides than a half-seeing reason. And it is wise to trust to nature, where without her we have nothing to lean on but ourselves, as individuals. In the natural world, it is most interesting to see, how carefully Providence has provided a system of checks to secure us against the consequences of our inevitable ignorance. Miscalculate a mechanical power, and the first machine constructed on it refuses to work. Mistake the action of a drug, and disease immediately betrays itself. Trust to nature to regulate the functions of our bodily organs, and when food is required she reminds us of it by hunger, and when our muscles are exhausted, weighs down our eyes with sleep. And the same spirit of considerate mercy seems to watch over our moral constitution, and either save us wholly from error, or check us the moment we fall into it, when we listen in faith and duty to our moral sensibilities, instead of applying to reason to tamper with and suspend

them. There is a rough homebred sense, a natural instinctive moral wisdom, which finds its way more directly to its end, than casuistry with all its ponderings—feelings which even unconsciously secure results, that no calculations could accomplish—a power, and force, and unity of action, and command over others, attached to one paramount submission to duty, which no systematic reasoning can hope to achieve. Perhaps the most remarkable illustration of this is to be found in a comparison of those ancient systems of legislation, which sprung almost unconsciously from the fixed habits and feelings of a people; and those which have been contrived in recent days upon principles of reason. The one all coherence, simplicity, and solidity, penetrated with one spirit, and universal in all their applications; the other full of discrepancies, and incongruities, either not foreseen at all, or provided for by a cumbersome machinery, which clashes with some other movements.

Reason should indeed be employed to regulate instinct; and philosophy to explain moral duties—but to regulate and explain only. When they are assumed as the primary guides, we desert the hand of nature, and there is no substitute for it in human art. And as nature then fails to check our errors herself, we are left as individuals to much more perplexing experiences. We adhere to our judgments more obsti-

nately. We follow them more heedlessly. We pride ourselves on them with more arrogance. And thus the very employment of reason tends to perpetuate errors.

And let us remember what these errors are. They are not miscalculations and misconceptions, which leave the laws of nature untouched to work out the wisdom of their design unaffected by the ignorance of man. It may be that some future day may overthrow all the theory of Newton: but the planets will continue in their course and the sun shed its light upon the earth the same as ever. But it is otherwise in morals. It is mind that God has appointed to rule over his sentient beings, and has permitted it to mar their fate, and seemingly to thwart his providence. Corrupt the spring of life and no healing hand can purify the stream that issues from it. Pervert the rule of action, and every attempt at measurement only multiplies and perpetuates distortion.

And let us not suppose that the poison is less noxious, or the distortion less fearful, because the errors by which they are propagated, when stated abstractedly and generally are obscure and unintelligible.

If metaphysical principles are true at all, they must be truths of the human mind—statements of facts universally existing, though not made the subject of distinct reflection—an analysis of

laws under which we are acting in every moment of life, though their influence by the mass of the world is unfelt and unseen. Nothing perhaps is more striking as we ascend to the highest generalizations in moral subjects, than the universality of agency possessed by a few abstract principles. Every action and every thought radiates from the mind as from a centre. Each projected line takes from it an internal bias, and the slightest divergency at first terminates in remotest aberration from the direction of right and truth.

And if this fact is alarming as regards individuals in the privacy of their own lives, it is infinitely more so when we regard it as extended to societies.

Were men insulated from each other like plague-stricken victims in a pest house, even then it would be frightful to contemplate a single human life distempered and destroyed by one slight breath of infection. How much more when bodies, and nations, and generations unborn may drink in the seeds of a moral pestilence while hanging unconsciously on the lips of their instructors. For moral science in some shape or another is the instructor of the world. It may take its stand above us in the garb of a cold contemplative philosophy, busied in an ideal creation, but even then men gather round it, and learn its lessons, though it seems to repel

their worship, and flies from their pursuit. Or it may assume the voice of the orator, or clothe its abstractions in the visions of poetry, or sit unseen upon the machine of political systems, secretly directing their movements, and combining their forces; or it may take even a humbler form, and plunge men under common names, and the vulgarities of the most unspiritual passions into sins and miseries—still it is moral science, or something that professes to be science. It is some view of human nature—some theory of duty—some speculation on the relations of man to man—full perhaps of error, but dignified with the name of reason, and strong in unsuspecting self-confidence—I say nothing of its effects upon religion. Without entering as yet on this question there is enough surely in the view here taken of the work itself of moral philosophy, of its natural tendencies, of the complexity of the subject on which it is employed, of the thick darkness which covers its whole region, of the precariousness and perversion of the instruments employed in its search, and of the extent, magnitude, and rapid propagation of errors from which apparently no human art can save it—there is enough assuredly in all this to make us tremble when men undertake its enquiries.

And if we have at all adequately considered the danger, we shall proceed with more advantage to a short view of its safeguards. The dangers

were reducible to two kinds—one of unpractical speculation—the other of erroneous deductions from false partial views of human nature.

The safeguards are of two kinds also, though happily closely connected. I proceed to the first.

It is the placing all our enquiries and speculations under the encouragement, support, and control of some clear, definite, paramount practical duty, which may meet us at every step, and remind us constantly that we are actors in the world, even in the world of reason, and not spectators.

It has been stated before that the perfection of our nature at present consists in the right developement of mental power, that this power can only be generated by obedience to duty, and that all duty depends upon our relations to persons and not to things. The binding force of a duty depends upon the importance and multiplicity of the relations from which it flows.

A fellow-countryman has claims upon our conduct, but to a less extent than a friend—a friend than a benefactor, a benefactor than a brother, a brother than a parent, a parent if he is above ourselves in wisdom and goodness, than if he is inferior—one who teaches, and guides, and guards, and blesses us in all our noblest interests, than one who merely provides for our bodily necessities. All this is clear without once leaving

the ground of acknowledged facts, and purely moral theories.

But it is not so obvious—it seems in the present day to be almost forgotten—that there are two descriptions of persons, each possessing a right over our actions, each imperatively requiring from us the due fulfilment of those relations in which nature and God have placed us to them.

There are individual Persons—and there are Persons made up of societies. Any body of men speaking by one voice, and acting as a community, is as capable in the eye of a moralist, of possessing moral rights, and of claiming moral duties, as it is in the eyes of the jurist of inheriting property, or of exercising a trust. It may stand to us in relations as clearly seen, and as strictly binding as any individual.

The relation of brotherhood, consanguinity, beneficence, instruction, protection, even something more than a moral parentage, may all be enjoyed and fulfilled by bodies of men just as they are by us separately.

But I will go still farther. And without entering at present into casuistry, we must give to our duties towards bodies in very many instances a paramount claim over duties to any individuals. It is the case, where the latter can exist only by the sanction and support of the former. And this was the view, as sound as it was noble, taken

by the great heroes and philosophers of antiquity, when they raised up the image of the state and placed it before the eyes of their citizens, as the object of an absorbing devotion, in which all lower relations were to be lost.

But it is the case also, where by the combination of many minds aiding and counteracting each other, a single Person is created superior to any individual in those moral attributes which command reverence, obedience, and faith.

Wisdom and goodness and truth—even in individuals—even where no palpable communication exists between us and them, place their possessor to us in a definite moral relation, and exact from us definite moral duties. And whether they are set before us in a single human body, or in the words and deeds of a community, is to us the same. But the duty of faith and of submission to the judgment of such a community, even when unconfirmed by our own enquiry, is more binding than that of unsuspecting confidence in individuals, inasmuch as the chances of error are less, and almost universally the elevation of principle is more marked and high.

Our first and highest and universal duty is to that person who stands to us in the first and highest and most necessary relations.

ἦ οὕτως εἰ σοφὸς—say the Laws to Socrates—
οὕτως εἰ σοφὸς ὥστε λέληθέ σε ὅτι μητρός τε καὶ

πατρὸς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων προγόνων ἁπάντων τιμιώτερόν ἐστι πατρὶς καὶ σεμνότερον, καὶ ἁγιώτερον καὶ ἐν μειζονι μοίρᾳ καὶ παρὰ θεοῖς καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσι, καὶ σέβεσθαι δεῖ, καὶ μᾶλλον ὑπείκειν καὶ θωπεύειν πατρίδα ἢ πατέρα, καὶ ἢ πείθειν, ἢ ποιεῖν ἃ ἂν κελεύῃ, καὶ πάσχειν, ἐάν τι προστάττῃ παθεῖν. βιάζεσθαι δ' οὐχ ὅσιον οὔτε μητέρα, οὔτε πατέρα, πολὺ δὲ τούτων ἔτι ἧττον τὴν πατρίδα. Crito p. 102.

"Fremant omnes, licet, dicam quod sentio; bibliothecas mehercule omnium philosophorum unus mihi videtur xii. tabularum libellus, si quis legum fontes et capita viderit, et auctoritatis pondere, et utilitatis ubertate superare. Ac si nos, id quod maxime debet, nostra patria delectat, cujus rei tanta est vis, ac tanta natura, ut Ithacam illam in asperrimis saxulis, tanquam nidulum affixam, sapientissimus vir immortalitati anteponeret; quo amore tandem inflammati esse debemus in ejusmodi patriam quæ una in omnibus terris domus est virtutis imperii dignitatis? Cujus primum nobis mens, mos, disciplina nota esse debet, vel quia est patria parens omnium nostrum, vel quia tantâ sapientiâ fuisse in jure constituendo putanda est, quantâ fuit in his tantis opibus imperii comparandis." Cicero de Orat. Lib. 1. Cap. 44. There may be much in these considerations requiring farther explanation. But they are truths very old—Catholic moral doctrines handed down by the traditions

of all the best ages of philosophy, and which even in the present day seem rather forgotten than denied.

And the deduction which I would draw is this; that if we do find ourselves placed in connection with any body, exercising to us the duties of the closest and tenderest and noblest relation of human nature—if on it depend the right fulfilment of all other relations of social life—if the moral authority of this body, attested by all the acknowledged evidences of mental greatness, is superior to that of any other society, and, much more, to that of any individual upon earth, then our duty to that body is paramount to all other earthly duties, and all our speculations, like all our actions, should be placed under its control, and subordinated to the furtherance of its views.

It must be evident that we are approaching to a point where moral enquiry enters upon facts, which are more peculiarly the province of Theology. I am well aware of the difficulties and objections which lie in ambush on the ill-defined boundaries of these two sciences ready to start up and repel any farther advance.

But I have been anxious to secure the observations hitherto made from any charge of confusing the true lines of demarcation, by observing a course of argument strictly rationalistic. It has, if founded on true principles, brought us

to a question of fact, on which depends the right direction of all moral speculations, and which will fix their peculiar office, as subordinated, like all other actions, to one grand paramount duty. This fact is the existence of a body in which we are already incorporated as members, a body standing to us in the same relation as that mysterious but real impersonation of human nature in its noblest form, which the wise and good of ancient days strove to rear up as a Parent, and Nurse, and Guide, and Example to imperfect man; and enshrined for him as his deified Country, midway between earth and heaven. Let us look round upon the world with the eye of the coldest reason, cast away all the intuitions of faith, and then ask ourselves if there is not such a body standing at this moment above us, and in all the reality of life and action, by every law and sanction of our moral nature, demanding our whole hearts and lives for a purpose of its own. Analyze every connection of life from which a duty on our part flows, and see if they are not all contained, but in the noblest and purest form, in the relation to ourselves of the church. Is it a connection of benefit? Life—we need not say our spiritual life, for this might be intruding on the mysteries of faith—but our moral life—whence does it come but from the church? Even our physical life is scarcely in a greater degree conferred by our natural parents—than its main and essen-

tial blessings—all that render it worth possessing or supportable—have been wrought out and secured for us by the church. Our education, our instruction, with all the vast machinery of learning, and books, and localities, and teachers, which is acting on the human mind, have been provided for us—it is a fact of history—by the church. If there is any knowledge, any hope, any work more worthy than another of a reasoning being, it is supplied us by the church. If any affection and sympathy can bind us to a human being, the spirit of Christian charity, not a mere delusion of heated sensibility, but a true, steady, pervading love, which exists as a matter of fact towards every member of its body, must unite us to the church.. And if the relation be one of reverence for a superior being, the historian of man will search in vain through all the records of the world for any personified representation of wisdom, goodness, and greatness, more nearly approaching to the perfection of man's earthly nature, more like to the image of God, than the incorporation of the Christian church from the beginning of the world. That man indeed is guilty of a deep sin against his moral nature, who can stand on the soil of this country, and call up the image of its constitution, and gather round him as a guardian host, beneath whose lessons and inspirations he is living, its sages and heroes, and kings—all the line of a noble ancestry,

and the wonders of their deeds—and can remember that this ancestry is his, and this inheritance achieved for him, and can then turn away without a thought that he owes a duty even to the memory of the past—that generations may have died, and their monuments have mouldered in the dust—but that a Spirit has been left in the land before which as reasoning creatures, with hearts of flesh and blood, we are bound to bow down and serve—not servilely—not blindly—but with deep reverence, with affectionate gratitude, with filial faith, with most earnest zeal. But let him then look through this moral Person and Power, which we love and cherish as our Country, and he will see above and beyond it another Person embodied as distinctly in a polity, but raised far higher in the scale of moral beings—raised in fact to the highest point at which mere human nature has ever existed, standing to himself in the noblest and most affecting relations, and therefore demanding from him the highest of earthly duties. He will discover, not hemmed in by narrow boundaries of soil or climate, but embracing the whole world—as the common country of all other countries, the Christian church. He will perceive, (it is a matter of fact, not a mystery of faith,) that from this has been derived nearly all—I would say all—the wisdom, and virtue, and power, and glory, which consecrate and almost deify even the remnants

of our civil polity—that cast off from the grand image of this polity, all the life and light which have fallen on it from the radiation of the church, and it is left cold, and impoverished, and dead—a useless block—with neither eyes to see nor ears to hear. He will observe in the unity of its will, in its consenting reason, in simplicity of purpose, in clear declaration of deliberate choice, in the practical exercise of rights and duties, in uniformity of figure, in external visibility, in facilities of access, in energy of power, in continuity of existence—that in all these the elements of personality, no power has existed on the earth since its creation so marked for the object of moral duties and the centre of moral affections, as the Christian church. And then let him remember that as the hold of our country upon our hearts depends not on any one man, or single age, or partial excellence, but on the whole aggregate of greatness and goodness which has created and preserved, and consecrated its institutions—so the moral elevation of the church is to be estimated at the whole amount of wisdom, holiness and energy, which from its infancy to this day have been essentially embodied in its polity. All the accumulated knowledge which has been lavished in its defence—all the powers of mind which have been exerted by its members—all the confessions of its worth extorted from enemies—all

the satisfaction of men who have run through every other relation of life, and found no repose but in the enjoyment of this—the heroism of all its martyrs, the holiness of all its saints—the depth, and force, and moderation of all its counsels—all these let a man gather together—throw off from it the sins and imperfections which have collected around it against its will, by the workings of outward accidents—and then place together what is left—and there will rise up before him a form of majesty, purity, and beauty, worthy of taking its stand at the head of this visible creation—as the Minister and High Priest of God, to bring us into the sanctuary of his presence, and offer there ourselves, our souls and bodies—all our intellect, as well as all our hearts and actions—to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice to the great Maker and Lord of all.

I will not dwell longer upon this point. No one here will confound this moral allegiance to the Christian church, as man's first and highest duty within the range of the visible world—a duty flowing from the noblest relations—with a servile subjection to it. No one will conceive that it derogates one tittle from the one great duty of man towards his God. No moral relation can exist without freedom—least of all the relation of instruction—and no duty can be discharged to the church, which does not lead to, and flow from duty to God. We begin by loving the church

in the person of its ministers. Her first command is to know and to love our God—and the first command of God is to know and love his church.

It is therefore on this clear and definite duty, which may be established without once departing from the peculiar province of ethical science, or entering on the world of faith, that the actions of our thoughts as well as of our bodies, our enquiries as well as our practice, should proceed and be directed, if they are to avoid the evils of an indolent speculation, and conduce to the genuine improvement of human nature by strengthening its internal powers. We want a duty for this purpose, a feeling to stimulate, a law to obey, and we can find none higher. And this view will possess an incalculable advantage, in withdrawing us from those vague and often fancied motives of general benevolence or partial attachment, or religious emotion, under which these enquiries sometimes are in truth, but more often are only assumed to be pursued. It will throw our benevolence into the clear and definite channel of contributing to the good of men by bringing them, so far as moral speculation can bring them, within the bosom of Christianity. It will turn those particular affections which fix themselves on homes, or countries, or parties, or individuals, towards the great community of the Christian faith, and through it will

direct our reason to the developement of its characteristic distinctions and to the promotion of its ends, within those limits of moral investigation which are marked out by ethical science itself. And it will exercise our religious affections in illustrating the wisdom and labouring for the end of that great system of God's providence transmitted to us through the records of the church, a system which we can neither appreciate, nor explain, nor manage as we ought, until we have expanded to the utmost its analogy with the dealings of nature and its adaptation to the wants of our hearts.

Here then is a boundless field open for moral speculation—embracing not only anatomical researches into the constitution of the human mind, but views of its destiny and end—of the adaptation of all around us to its growth and perfection, of the first principles of societies, of the just theory of laws, of the essential distinctions of truth, of the analogies of nature and revelation—even of the most abstruse metaphysical generalizations; inasmuch as the pest of an anti-christian philosophy very often commences its work in these unseen recesses, into which it retreats from the light of day, and must be pursued there and dragged out before it can be destroyed. We do not narrow the province of the science nor excuse its indolence—but only regulate and give energy to its movements by placing it under

the control of religion, and of Christian religion.

And I turn now, as the last point, to a safeguard supplied to us from the same source, against those errors, often latent indeed and abstract, but yet most fatal, into which we must fall as imperfect men speculating imperfectly on moral subjects, without some given principles of truth. Were we perfect, we might judge of moral facts as we judge of objects of vision, by the eye—by their appearance to ourselves individually. But as ignorance and some degree at least of depravation are essentially inherent in our nature, we must use the same caution in the exercise of our reason as we should in the use of our limbs, if we knew we were more than half paralyzed and half blind. Hence the necessity of carrying with us some principles to guide us—some great established doctrines to fall back upon—some checks and fetters upon our hasty fancies, which may remind us at a moment by their pressure when we are wandering too far. As each man in forming an opinion conceives that he is right, and discredits the opinion of another; there is but one mode remaining of securing such guides and checks—of giving a sanction to any one class of principles in preference to others—one mode only of preventing that hopeless scepticism into which we sink at beholding in all around us

the equally firm, equally unsuspecting, equally conscientious maintenance of the most contrary doctrines. It is authority, human authority, common consent—in one word Catholicity *.

I will not enter here into the importance of this principle, its general reception even where seemingly rejected, its absolute necessity to all reasoning, and all practice. It might be more necessary in the present day to fix its limitations and describe its conditions. But these are already supplied by the received laws of testimony. An accordance of many minds differently constituted, in different circumstances, arriving through independent channels at the same conclusion, persevering under great trials, judging coolly, deliberately, and disinterestedly, on subjects with which they are conversant, and asserting positions repugnant to the crude fancies and rash passions of mankind—such an accordance does under permission from God possess the high prerogative of stamping opinions as truths, and throwing them into circulation as a necessary medium of knowledge, rather to be used than

* ἔνδοξα δὲ τὰ δοκοῦντα πᾶσιν, ἢ τοῖς πλειστοις, ἢ τοῖς σοφοῖς· καὶ τούτοις ἢ τοῖς πᾶσιν, ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις, ἢ τοῖς μάλιστα γνωρίμοις καὶ ἐνδόξοις. Arist. Top. Lib. 1. Cap. 1. These are the sources of dialectic reasonings, and comprise all subjects except those susceptible of mathematical demonstration. Human authority is therefore recognised by Aristotle himself as the great basis of practical truths.

suspected — which privately we are called to prove; but even to question publicly, and except under the gravest necessity, is wantonly to tamper with the foundations of our social existence.

If such an accordance has thus ratified any primary truths on the great questions of ethical science—we are privileged, and we are bound to assume them as grounds and data for our reasonings; to doubt every conclusion opposed to them, to admit no contradiction till supported by at least an equal authority, and not merely to keep them with us as checks upon possible error, but rather to proceed from them into reasonings, in the nature of proofs and illustrations—which as they confirm our assumptions if true, will necessarily expose them if false.

It is in morals as in religion; we must receive first and prove afterwards—act on truths before we understand them—believe in order to be convinced. Faith is in both, not only the substance of things hoped for, but the evidence, the ἔλεγχος—the only mode of bringing to the proof, things unseen.

And if complaints are made that philosophy thus employed in developing rather than amplifying, in applying old principles rather than in discovering new, is abandoning its duty; if men are not satisfied with the mass of ethical truths grafted in the heart at our birth, brought out in our earliest infancy, placed whole and entire

in our hands with the first lessons of our boyhood, and current in the practice of mankind through every age and country, so that no age has discovered one moral law which was not acted on in the first generation of the world—and no man by advancing in life discovers one which he cannot trace back, and find in his childhood—if all this mass of natural knowledge, and all that is revealed in the Bible, seems to fall short of a sufficient store for the future speculations of a curious reason, let us remember, what is true of all science, what is the very condition of all knowledge, that invention of new things is nothing but the combination of old. To understand is only to perceive a coincidence of strange phænomena with old laws—the extension of wisdom is only the analysis of generalities already possessed—and we do nothing in any science, but perform the same process of illustration and application only, to which ethical science must be confined.

While human nature continues the same, no new discoveries can be made in its constitution—without we invent falsities and construct a monster. We may say of it, with a little alteration, what Vincentius has eloquently said of the application of reason to Christian doctrines in general.

"Sed forsitan dicit aliquis, Nullusne ergo profectus habebitur philosophiæ? Habeatur plane,

et maximus. Nam quis est tam invidus hominibus, tam exosus Deo, qui istud prohibere conetur? Sed ita tamen, ut vere profectus sit ille philosophiæ, non permutatio. Siquidem ad profectum pertinet, ut in semetipsâ unaquæque res amplificetur, ad permutationem vero, ut aliquid ex alio in aliud transvertatur. Imitetur philosophia animorum rationem corporum, quæ licet annorum processu numeros suos evolvant, et explicent, eadem tamen quæ erant, permanent. Multum interest inter pueritiæ florem, et senectutis maturitatem, sed iidem tamen ipsi fiunt senes, qui fuerant adolescentes: ut quamvis unius ejusdemque hominis status habitusque mutetur, una tamen nihilominus, eademque natura, una eademque persona sit. Parva lactentium membra, magna juvenum: eadem ipsa sunt tamen. Quot parvulorum artus, tot virorum: et si qua illa sunt, quæ ævi maturioris ætate pariuntur, jam in seminis ratione proserta sunt, ut nihil novum postea proferatur in senibus, quod non in pueris jam antea latitaverat. Unde non dubium est, hanc esse legitimam et rectam proficiendi regulam, hunc ratum atque pulcherrimum crescendi ordinem; si eas semper in grandioribus partes ac formas numerus detexat ætatis, quas in parvulis Creatoris sapientia præformaverat. Quod si humana species in aliquam deinceps non sui generis vertatur effigiem, aut certe addatur quippiam membrorum numero, vel detrahatur, nec-

esse est ut totum corpus vel intercidat, vel prodigiosum fiat, vel certe debilitetur. Ita etiam philosophiæ sequatur has decet profectuum leges; ut annis scilicet consolidetur, dilatetur tempore, sublimetur ætate: incorruptum tamen illibatumque permaneat, et universis partium suarum mensuris, cunctisque quasi membris ac sensibus propriis plenum atque perfectum sit; quod nihil præterea permutationis admittat, nulla proprietatis dispendia, nullam sustineat definitionis varietatem." Vincent. Adv. Hær.

And let us consider for a moment what are the main questions in the philosophy of mind. They are the laws of duty, the end of our being, the means of happiness, the main facts of our internal constitution, the theory of education, the relation of man to man, and of man to God, the existence and extent of a spiritual world, and the process by which we may raise ourselves to become even upon earth participators in its glories. And we must not permit either the peculiarities of theological language, or the received distinction between theology and philosophy to hide from us the fact, that the main doctrines of the Christian church, especially as exhibited in our formularies of faith, are in a great measure answers to all these questions. They are answers in two ways, directly and indirectly. Directly, in those points where the facts of human nature are stated as—its free agency, its

helplessness, its responsibility, its corruption, its law of duty; indirectly, where the doctrines relate to the nature and dealings of God, and may be considered as correlative to that human nature on which, as one at least of the ends of revealed truth, they are designed to act. In the former case we have the knowledge of the lock given us directly; in the latter it may partially be inferred from the nature of the key.

I am well aware that this view of the connection between Christian dogmas and moral speculation will be alarming to some minds, as tending to restore two periods by no means favourable to the cause of truth, the first when philosophy corrupted religion—the second when religion enslaved philosophy.

But we are really not to be deterred from truth by apprehension of errors. Let us guard first against all vain unpractical speculation for which we cannot assign some definite object of duty tending to the spread of vital Christianity, and we shall not allow any dreams or theories of our own to substitute themselves for the plain doctrines of the Scriptures, which are revealed through the church, and received from it by faith.

Theology indeed and ethical science never can be separated from each other without ruin to both, any more than religion can be torn away from morality. They have their different

sources—faith and reason. One is a revelation from heaven, the other a revelation from our own hearts. And they have their different subjects. One teaches us the nature of God, the other the nature of man. And if the moral nature of God were unlike the nature of his creatures, no light could be thrown from one science on the other—nothing but the corruption of truth could follow from the mixture of their facts. But if it be the great fundamental law of ethics, without which no ethics can exist, that a moral nature in one Being demands a similar moral nature in all others, to lay the ground for moral duties and moral affections; if wholly and immeasurably above and different from man as the power and essence of God must be, his love, his justice, his mercy, his truth, cannot be held unlike to ours except in degrees, without severing our heart from him; if, in one word, the similarity of moral agents is the very bond of their union, and the essential condition of their relationship, then every light which falls upon the heart of man, may firmly but not irreverently be carried into the facts of Christianity, and aid in illuminating their recesses. And if the truths of Christianity are to be applied to the human heart, then a knowledge of the human heart is necessary to their right application. Christianity is the foundation of ethics. Ethics the illustration of Christianity. Only let us keep

clearly before us the principle, upon which, by the laws of our nature, all knowledge must be imbibed and transmitted, and there will be no fear of confusing the province of faith and reason.

Faith must percede, reason follow. Faith assert, reason prove. Faith grasp at truths by a moral assent, by an internal congeniality of feeling, by an instinct which is a sure indication of an unearthly spirit within us—reason expand and confirm, and apply and limit them—by each other, not by itself—as a child would practice by himself the movement which a parent is teaching him. Faith enforces the exercise of reason—reason prescribes the indulgence of faith. All that we receive upon an authority worthy of trust, that is, in true faith, reason will support—for no trustworthy authority exists in which reason is not an element, and reason never contradicts itself. And all that we learn from reason, from reason exercised as it should be exercised, faith will sanction, because right reason must arrive at truth, and all truth is comprised in the great leading axioms of a sound faith, or is in perfect harmony with their conclusions.

And he who believes his Bible, in all his researches into ethics must lay down for himself the laws which the church has laid down for herself—that church—"Quæ sedula et cauta depositorum apud se dogmatum custos, nihil in iis unquam permutat, nihil minuit, nihil addit;

non amputat necessaria, non apponit superflue; non amittit sua, non usurpat aliena; sed omni industriâ hoc unum studet, ut vetera fideliter sapienterque tractando, siqua sunt illa antiquitus informata et inchoata, accuret et poliat, siqua jam expressa et enucleata, consolidet, firmet; siqua jam conformata et definita, custodiat." Vincentius Lerin Commonit.

If we steadily maintain this view, we shall neither take for our first guide our own blind reason individually, instead of the combined reason of successive generations; nor yet cast away our reason, as if it were left in our option whether we would exercise it or not.

We shall take, as the main principles of all our ethical enquiries from which to proceed, and within which to work, the Catholic truths of morals, wherever we find them. And finding them within the Christian church we shall receive them so much the more readily, as having there been formed into axioms, stated with precision, connected with duties, incorporated with the whole system of private and national life, and sanctioned by the whole overwhelming weight of that human authority which is embodied in the church, and no where else. For if the church, in its character as a Person, possesses a paramount claim upon our duties, in its character as a witness of truth it has as paramount a claim on our faith. Its moral personality

forms, indeed, one of the strongest guarantees to its testimony, for goodness of heart is always to a certain degree a security for soundness of head. But its attestation to ethical truths, even in a purely logical and intellectual point of view, cannot be surpassed. It must take, at the very lowest, at least 1800 years, and the uninterrupted experience of Christendom for so many successive generations.—It must require as many prophets, as many sages, as many martyrs, as many saints, as many myriads of human beings, as directly or indirectly have consented to the truths which Christianity reveals or implies of human nature, before those truths can be overturned or denied by any process of legitimate reasoning—by any process, in fact, which would not set the few against the many, the ignorant against the informed, the judgment of a sect or party against the great mass of mankind, on a question, let us remember, not of abstract science, in which truth may be far from the surface, but of man's wants and feelings, and conduct, which are open to the experience of all. And with such an authority above us, presenting its truths to our hearts for the practical fulfilment of its work upon earth—I do not hesitate to assert, what the spirit of the day will deny, that belief becomes a duty, and unbelief a crime; not that doubt or certainty are immediately in our power, or alterable by

one act of the will, but that the suspension of decision, the deliberation, the submission of our actions to superior goodness, the regulation of our thoughts, the wish and the prayer to believe, and the instinctive humiliation of our own hearts before a mighty Spirit above them—these things, on which doubt or belief depend at last, are voluntary acts; they are due from fallible man to any great witness of truths; they cannot be omitted without a sin; their omission demands condemnation as much before the chair of philosophy as before the tribunal of Christ *.

And let it be added, the same principles of ethical reasoning which thus constitute the Christian church, the great object of our moral duties, and the first authorized teacher and

* If any theory of ethical philosophy rises up in opposition, or not in subservience to those facts of the same science which are contained in the Scriptures, and taught by the Church, there is a simple mode of meeting the question. There is an answer which we can hold in our hands, a cheap Bible. When any view of human nature shall be put forth to men, telling them what they are, what they should be, what they have been, and what they want; and when the wisest of men for ages shall have exhausted learning, and industry, and art, to place this view before the eyes of the whole world, and the world shall so readily have assented to its statement, and so eagerly demanded the possession of them, that whatever principles they contain, Stoicism, or Platonism, or Peripateticism, or Sensualism, or Utilitarianism, or any other peculiar school, they shall be embodied at such a cost, by societies of educated men, and circulated by common consent throughout the whole mass of mankind, as the staple support of our moral existence—then, and not till then, we may be prepared to adopt some new and contradictory philosophy of ethics, and to reject our Bible.

guarantee of our moral truths, I will not say confine, but most especially direct our interest, our affections, and our faith, towards that peculiar branch of it, to which we in this place have the happiness to belong. If universality of agreement, length of tradition, accumulation of moral authority, consistent perseverance in various persons under various circumstances, a long line of ancestry, and the transmission of hereditary Catholic doctrines—if these fix the standard of truth when individual opinions are fluctuating, and create an object for our obedience, and security for our belief, they do assuredly form the feature which distinguishes our own church from all other sects of christianity, as much as the Christian church at large is distinguished by them from all sects of philosophy. "These be cases," says its great apologist Bishop Jewel, embodying in few words the whole spirit of its institution, "These be cases, not of wit, but of faith; not of eloquence, but of truth; not invented or devised by us, but from the apostles and holy fathers, and founders of the church by long succession brought unto us. We are not the devisers thereof, but only the keepers; not the masters, but the scholars. Touching the substance of religion, we believe that the ancient Catholic learned fathers believed: we do that they did: we say that they said: and marvel not, in whatsoever ye see them,

if ye see us join unto the same. It is our great comfort," he concludes, "that we see their faith and our faith to agree in one. And we pity and lament your miserable case, that having of yourselves erected a doctrine contrary to all the ancient fathers, yet would thus essay to colour the same, and to deceive the people only with the names and titles of ancient fathers."—Jewel's Answer to Harding.

And it is this spirit of catholicity and antiquity which retains for our own branch of the Christian church all that authority which is due to the whole. The mantle has not been lost: the spirit of prophecy not been extinguished: the inheritance of power not been cut off.

No other sect has thus carefully trodden in the old paths, or retained hold of the possessions of their forefathers. And the ethical character of its doctrines has followed the wisdom of its temper, is imbued with the same spirit of faith, tempered by the same quietness, conformable alike to the Catholic traditions of ethical science, and stamped alike with that which is the great seal of truth;—the reconciliation of opposite principles, not by compromising either, but by retaining both in their perfection, and combining them in their natural subordination.

I have now endeavoured, without departing from that peculiar province which is assigned to the science of morals, namely, human nature

and the constitution of mind as they are exhibited within the range of our experience, to reach as conclusions those great principles which the natural suggestions of our hearts, and the prescribed line of ethical instruction in this place would of themselves lay down as the laws of philosophical enquiries. First, that the advancement of christianity in that form and system which is maintained by our own church must be the object of them all. Secondly, that wherever this church has provided for us judgments in morals, they are to be taken as certain groundworks of belief, to be proved, to be illustrated, to be qualified by each other in their application to particular cases, to be compared with the theories of antiquity, and the facts of experience, but never to be cast aside till the authority of accumulated reason, by which they are supported, is at least counterbalanced by an equivalent authority contradicting their statements.

In this course of argument the very fault has been committed, against which it is the great duty of this chair to protest in others, and especially to warn the young. We have reasoned from art to nature, from morals to religion, from science to conscience; in other words, for this is the real statement of the rationalistic controversy, not from human reason at large, but from human reason in the individual to the

common judgment of mankind.—Instead of taking those plain simple truths which a child or a labourer could teach us, because taught them by past generations, of our duty to our God and our faith to our religion, and contentedly exercising our reason in the application and confirmation of these, rather than in the formation of novel and more striking hypotheses. We seem to have forgotten for a time the great fact, that a man standing upon the earth, and from thence gazing up to heaven, can see but little of heaven and nothing of the earth; but that an angel looking down from heaven can embrace not only this narrow earth with the stars mirrored in its waters, but the compass of the whole universe above, below, and around it; and scarcely less is the difference between those who take their stand on their own reason, and their own feelings, and from thence speculate on religion, and those who with reverence and faith sit down at the feet of that Power which a merciful God has raised up to be our instructor in his ways, and from thence look down on the instincts of their heart, and direct the working of their reason.

But there is in the present generation such a deep-rooted suspicion of all truths which are not supported by independent reasonings, such alarm lest a despotic authority should be raised over the freedom of our minds, such a tendency

to cut off religious duties and religious facts from connection with our common life, and such a jealousy of replacing theology in her once abused dominion over other departments of science, that it seems almost necessary at times to descend from the high vantage position of simple faith, to meet mankind on their own low level, and to show that if we use the weapons of reason more reluctantly or less confidently, it is not that they refuse to do us service, or that we are incapable of employing them. But it is no mean pleasure—it is no unmanly pride—to avow, as the spirit of our system does avow in the face of a presumptuous age, that we know and distrust our ignorance, our infirmities, our sins;—that we do recognize, and do intend to obey, a wisdom and holiness superior to our own;—that we have a world about us unseen, but most real—a world of persons, and duties, and creations, which we can no more bear to abandon than we can part with our being;—that we can endure to be children in our hearts if we can be men in our practice; and that when from that high eminence of conscious truth and freedom where the mercy of God has placed us, we descend to labour in earthly knowledge, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, we do not and will not cast aside the hopes, and privileges, and glories with which we are wrapped round as Christians; will not deny their reality

by superseding their obligations; will not lose the Child and the Ambassador of God in the perplexities of a metaphysical speculator.

It was in this spirit that our admirable scheme of education was framed and must be supported; in this spirit that we may endeavour very humbly, but very firmly, to prosecute the enquiries entrusted to this chair; in this spirit that I will venture to pray from Him who is the fountain of all truth, and end of all knowledge, that, to the advancement of his glory, and the good of his church, he would be pleased to bless our endeavours, through that name, which we too often banish from our worldly business and worldly learning, as if it had no place but in the Bible, but which ought to be written upon our foreheads, and born in the front of all our undertakings, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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